TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

BULLETIN

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FOLK MUSIC OF WEST TENNESSEE

West Tennessee folk music is based upon both the country and the people.

The land, turned over by the Chickasaws to the white people, was laved on the east by the Tennessee River, and on the west by the Mississippi, both of which are rolling in song. The name, "Mississippi", meaning "Father of Waters", is rolling in rouster songs of the steamboat days. The Tennessee has religious and negro songs named from it. The Chickasaws claimed all the land between Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers as their "hunting ground".

God saw fit to divide the Western District into three parts: 1- The western part of the valley of the Tennessee River; 2- The Great Plateau of the middle section; 3- The Mississippi Bottom. The Great Plateau constituted by far the largest part of the country it gradually sloped as a whole, and thru it wended five westward flowing rivers: Wolf, Hatchie, Forked Deer, Obion, and Reelfoot. There is a Virginia Reel entitled "Forked Deer". The Mississippi Bottom was the most fertile part of the entire region where, in 1673, Negroes were first brought to the slave-worked cotton plantations. Marvelous had been the stories told the Negroes of the good things in store for them in the Western District. That it was literally a land flowing with milk and honey; so rich in soil that you only had to make a hole in the ground with your heel, drop the corn into it, and it would grow without work; the forest hanging with the most delicious fruits, and the ground covered with strawberries; fat pigs, already roasted, and running about with knife and fork in their backs -- much of which they wrought into song.

The whole country was covered by a dense primeval forest where the first music was furnished by a bright colored feathered choir of singers: mocking bird, bluebird, robin, vireo, oriole, meadowlark, bobolink, song and vesper sparrows, grosbeak, brown thrasher, chicadee, and green warbler.

West Tennessee folk music has been contributed by the red, white, and black races. History reveals that when De Soto first visited Tennessee in 1541, with his group of musicians, this was the beginning of four centuries of folk music in West Tennessee. The immigrants to the Western District brought with them the folk music of their old states and communities. The early comers consisted of Spanish discoveries, French explorers, English traders, from North Carolina principally, with the Irish wit, jigs, and reels of Davy Crockett thrown in for good measure. West Tennessee was settled chiefly by such persons as removed from East and Middle Tennessee, and by others from North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Alabama.

The Chickasaw Nation, a noble race of the red man was first to resist the iron heel of the white man and was famed for its bravery and ferocious bearing in war, being among the first to make a generous and lasting peace and to cultivate the arts of civilization.

Two of those arts were music with dancing. With the Indian, the dance was almost inseparable from his song. Religious war songs invariably were accompanied by dancing. To the Indian, music acted as a means of communication between himself and the unseen bul all-powerful spirits. The Indian has a most complicated and highly developed ritual. The medicine men have a monopoly of the religious songs. James Adair lived among the Chickasaws and discovered that their music resembled the Hebrew music of the Bible.

"CALUMET" DANCE

De Soto and his party failed to smoke the "Calumet" with Big Chief Chisca upon entering Chicasaw territory for which cause the Chicasaws gave battle.

In 1673, Father Jasques Marquette describes his visit at Chickasaw Bluff: "I first presented my feathered calumet; they danced the calumet".

Calumet Ceremony

Instead of shaking hands, the Indians meeting in a friendly way, rubbed each other's arms and bodies. There were also more ceremonious exchanges of civilities to insure or restore peace. The calumet pipe was brought out when the Indians met strangers in order to determine whether they were friendly. In this ceremonial, it was usual to bring the ambassador of a friendly nation into camp on the shoulders of the host's people or on a litter; and chiefs and their wives were also carried from one place to another on those litters. The offering of food was an indispensible mark of hospitality whether bestowed by an individual to an individual or by an official tribal delegation to another. The rite in vogue along the Mississippi River was called the "Calumet Dance" or "the singing of the calumet dance".

The calumet was a long pipestem ornamented with feathers. The pipe itself was obtained by preference from the famous red pipe stone quarries in the north. The calumet or great pipe of peace was made of the feathers of the white eagle's tail (Vultur sacra) curiously formed and displayed like an open fan on a sceptre or staff, as white and clean as possible when displayed for peace; but when for war, the feathers were painted or tinged with vermillion. In these rites, the sacred character of tobacco was stressed.

Religious ceremony was more or less mixed with social relaxation in the feasts held after a successful hunt or upon the arrival of strangers. A messenger was sent in to prepare a feast after the king and his retinue had killed several bears. A fire was kindled in the area of the public square where the royal standard or feathered calumet was displayed, and the drum beat gave notice to the town of the royal feast.

After the feast the King repaired the council-house in the square where the chiefs and warriors, old and young, and such of the whites as were chosen, repaired also.

The chief, with the rest of the white people in town, took their seats according to order; tobacco and pipes were brought out; the calumet was lighted and smoked, circulating according to the usual forms and ceremony. The king or chief smoked first a few whiffs, blowing the smoke off ceremoniously first towards the sun, or as was generally supposed, to the Great Spirit; next toward the four cardinal points; then toward the white people in the house. The great pipe was taken from the hand of the mico by a slave and presented to the chief white man, and then to the great war chief, circulating through the rank of head men and warriors, returning the to the king. Each one filled his pipe from his own or his neighbour's skin. This ceremony was followed by dancing which lasted all night.

SOCIAL DANCES

Akanka hila', "chicken dance", having 4 songs
Bala' hila', "bean dance", with 5 songs
Fala hila', "crow dance", with 4 songs
Fotco hila', "duck dance", with 4 songs

Hatcuntcubá, hila', "alligator dance", with 3 songs
Ickobo tokolo'hila', "double-headed dance", with 1 song
Isonc homa hila', "red ant dance", with 3 songs
Itin sanali hila', dance in which they danced against each other, with 4 songs
Kofo hila', "quail dance", with 4 songs
Luksi hila', "turtle dance", with 5 songs
Nani kalo hila', "garfish dance", with 3 songs
Nitak coboli hila', beating-on-a-bearskin-hide dance, with 6 songs
Nita hila', "bear dance"
Ofo' hila', "dog dance" with 5 songs
Okaicko' hila' "drunken man's dance", with 10 songs
Stinti''hila', "snake dance", with 3 songs
Sipokni hila', "old dance", with 1 song
Soba hila' or Issuba-hila "horse dance", with 4 songs
Catani hila' or Shut-tun-hihla, "tick dance", with 8 songs repeated 4 times
Cawi hila', "raccoon dance", with 4 songs
Tcalok'loka' hila', "turkey dance", with 3 songs
Tcukfi hila', "rabbit dance"
Takha hila', "catfish dance", with 3 songs
Tantci hila', "corn dance", with 3 songs
Yanac hila', "buffalo dance", with 4 songs

Opera: "KALOPIN"

The opera, "Kolopin", is musically based on authentic Indian themes. The composer, Charles Sanford Skilton, became interested in Indian music after joining the University of Kansas faculty upon finding that the Haskell Institute for Indians was located in that same community. He exchanged private music lessons for tribal songs which various Indian pupils sang to him. Later he visited Indian communities listening to their music and absorbing their curious rhythms.

The libretto was written by Mrs. Virginia Armistead Nelson, a poet, author, and newspaperwoman of Nashville. The libretto is based upon the Indian legend of the forming of Reelfoot Lake. This legend is to the effect that the Great Spirit sent the earthquake and flood to destroy the village of the Chickasaws because the young chief, Reelfoot, (Kalopin, in the opera) disregarded tribal customs and warnings and took a bride from the Choctaw tribe. The Choctaws believed in a legend centuries old: "That is one of their tribe married into an alien band, disaster of untold horror would fall upon both nations".

FOLK MUSIC OF THE PIONEERS

DAVID CROCKETT

David Crockett, West Tennessee's most famous pioneer, hunter, and hero became "our first Southern humorist"; the coonskin philosopher was wafted into Congress on a gale of laughter. One of the six great scouts of pioneer days, the quaintest, the most striking, the most original figure in Southwestern history was David Crockett

Davy, thoroughly at home, took his part in the extravagant f features of the frolicsome reels and riotous quadrilles. There is a Virginia Reel entitled "Colonel Crockett".

The Ballad of Davy Crockett

Now, don't you want to know something concernin'
Where it was I come from and where I got my learnin'?
Oh, the world is made of mud out o' the Mississippi River!
The sun's a ball of foxfire, as well you may discover.

Chorus:
Take the ladies out at night. They shine so bright
They make the world light when the moon is out of sight.

And so one day as I was goin' a-spoonin'
I met Colonel Davy, and he was goin' a-coonin'.
Says I, "Where's your gun?" "I ain' got none."
"How you goin' kill a coon when you haven't got a gun?"

Says he, "Pompcalf, just follow after Davy,
And he'll soon show you how to grin a coon crazy."
I followed on a piece and thar set a squirrel,
A-settin' on a log and a-eatin' sheep sorrel.

When Davy did that see, he looked around at me,
Saying, "All I want now is a brace agin your knee".
And thar I braced a great big sinner.
He grinned six times hard enough to git his dinner!

The critter on the log didn't seem to mind him
Jest kep' a-settin' thar and wouldn't look behind him.
Then it was he said, "The critter must be dead.
See the bark a-flyin' all around the critter's head?"

I walked right up the truth to discover.
Drot! It was a pine knot so hard it made me shiver.
Says he, "Pompcalf, don't you begin to laugh
I'll pin back you ears, and bite you in half!"

I flung down my gun and all my ammunition.
Says I, "Davy Crockett, I can cool your ambition!"
He throwed back his head and he blowed like a steamer.
Says he, "Pompcalf, I'm a Tennessee Screamer!"

Then we locked horns and we wallered in the thorns.
I never had such a fight since the hour I was born.
We fought a day and a night and then agreed to drop it.
I was purty badly whipped -- and so was Davy Crockett.

I looked all around and found my head a-missin'.
He'd bit off my head and I had swallered his'n!
Then we did agree to let each other be;
I was too much for him, and he was too much for me.

[illegible]

Joe Seahorn Stol'd a Hog"

In the Big Hatchie Country, during the fall and winter, newcomers began to find their way, and to found settlements; yet the Williams family was without neighbors save a few squatters and occupants. The smoke from their cabins could be seen rising up through the dense forest in many directions. Their nearest squatter neighbor was old Mrs. Seahorn, her son Joe, and son-in-law Bill Barnes. An occurrence soon happened that required Joe Seahorn to precipt in some other section of the wild-woods. Mr. Williams had been missing some of his fattening hogs at a period of the year when old Bruin did not feed upon flesh. Old Jack, who was the hog minder and defender, was put to look out for signs that would lead to solve the mystery of the missing hogs. Stalking through a thick hazlenut thicket near the squatter's cabin, his dog grabbed up from behind a large log, the skin of a hog. It proved, from the flesh-marks, to be the skin of one of the missing hogs. Cutting a pole, he hoisted it upon his shoulder and brought it home. The mystery of the missing hogs was solved. Mr. Williams sent for Joe Seahorn, to require from him an explanation as to how the hide of one of his hogs came to be covered up in the leaves near his house. Seahorn vowed his want of knowledge and total ignorance in the matter, visiting imprecations upon old Jack's head, swearing that the old negro lied if he said that he found the hide near his house, and accused him of being the guilty party, and then laying it upon him to throw suspicion off from himself and the other negroes. Mr. Williams, however, was in no wise convinced of Seahorn's innocence. Negro testimony being of no avail, he made him to understand that he must find an occupant claim in some other quarter more congenial to the occupation he proposed following. Seahorn's hog-stealing soon found a place in song. Some of the boys worked off several verses, which was sung to the tune of "Harper's Creek and Roaring River". The following four lines are yet remembered of it as it was sung in the neighborhood by the boys and negroes:

Joe Seahorn, he stol'd a hog,
The hide he hid behind a log.
Old Jack's dog, he found the hide,
And Seahorn swore that Jack he lied.

Casey Jones in Song and Story

Jackson has not only been the home of railroad presidents, but the home of many faithful and competent employees of the roads which enter the city. Probably the most famous of these men was Casey Jones, the engineer who died at his post of duty back at the turn of the century. Casey's tragic death was the cause of the singing of what may be called a folk ballad by one of his colored admirers. The song of the brave engineer from Jackson, Tennessee who rode to death and to fame on his "heavy six-wheeler" has been sung in many variations wherever railroaders have gone, extending all over the United States, to France, to Germany, and even among the native of South Africa.

Casey (so-called from his home town Cayce, Ky.) Jones was known among his friends as a "fast-roller" and whose engine had a mournful but musical whistle. Those were the days when a whistle was personal property, not standard equipment. An engineer in St. Louis had given "Casey" his peculiar whistle and he, according to the colored wipers and oilers at the shops, could "just natchell get no' music outta dat whistle dan ennybody else on de ole I. C.". Residents along the line of the Illinois Central learned to recognize Casey's whistle, a long, drawn-out, soft note which rose and then died away in a whisper. All the switchmen knew by the engine's means "that the man at the throttle was Casey Jones" when Casey was the throttle puller of the I. C. "Cannon Ball" on the Memphis-Canton run.

On Sunday night, April 29, 1900, Casey and his fireman, Sim Webb, had just brought their train in when they learned that Engineer Lewis was ill; so Casey immediately volunteered to take No. 638 on her run. At 4 o'clock on April 30, the train, having already made up her lost time, approached Vaughn, Mississippi, where a side track began at the end of a curve. Casey and Sim Webb both saw the freight on the siding, but neither knew that there were two sections of the freight, and that the rear of section two was on the main line, had the freight engineer intended "to saw by".

A rocket was placed up the track to slow Casey down but plans went awry; Casey rounded the curve, heard the rocket, saw the cars ahead, set the air brakes, and yelled to Sim Webb, the fireman: "Jump, Sim!" Then, Casey rode the roaring 638 into a holocaust of crashing wood that splintered like a match box. When Casey's body was taken from the wreckage, it was said that one hand was found on the whistle cord and the other on the air-brake lever. Sim Webb remembered that as he jumped, Casey held down on the whistle in a long piercing scream. He must have been trying to warn the freight conductor in the caboose. The engine and the baggage cars were the ones that left the track. No one else was killed.

Days passed and Wallace Saunders, a Negro wiper at the roundhouse who was continually making up songs about his favorite engines and engineers began humming a tune and singing a few lines about "an engineer, Casey Jones". The song remained a true uncopyrighted folk ballad until 1909 when it was popularized locally by a vaudeville team known as the Leighton Brothers and some song-writers, Newton and Seibert, who changed the words and published it. Though the words were changed, they retained the lilting refrain and the name of Casey Jones. It matters not whether the words are true to the facts of the story or not, there is a fascination about them, so the following version is quoted:

Casey Jones *

Come all you rounders for I want you to hear,
The story told of a brave engineer;
Casey Jones was a rounder's name
On a heavy six-eight-wheeler he rode to fame.

Caller called Jones about half-past four,
Jones kissed his wife at the station door;
Climbed into the cab with the orders in his hand,
Says, "This is my trip to the promised land".

Through South Memphis yards on the fly,
He heard the fireman say, "You've got a white-eye".
All the switchmen knew by the engine's moans
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

It had been raining for more than a week.
The railroad track was like the bed of a creek.
They rated him down to a thrity mile gait,
Threw the south-bound mail about eight hours late.

Fireman says, "Casey, you're runnin' too fast,
You run the block signal the last station you passed".
Jones says, "Yes, I think we can make it though
For she steams much better than I ever know".

Jones says, "Fireman, don't you fret,
Keep knockin' at the firedoor, don't give up yet;
I'm goin' to run her till she leaves the rail
Or make it on time with the south-bound mail".

Around the curve and a-down the dump
Two locomotives were abound to bump.
Fireman hollered, "Jones, it's just ahead,
We might jump and make it but we'll all be dead".

'Twas around this curve he saw a passenger train;
Something happened in Casey's brain;
Fireman jumped off, but Casey stayed on,
He's a good engineer but he's dead and gone.

Poor Casey was always all right,
He stuck to his post both day and night;
They loved to hear the whistle of old Number Three
As he came into Memphis on the Old K. C.

Headaches and heartaches and all kinds of pain
Are not apart from a railroad train;
Tales that are earnest, noble and gran'
Belong to the life of a railroad man.

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* "Historic Madison" by Emma Inman Williams; Madison County Historical Society, Jackson, Tenn., 1946.

* The song: "Casey Jones", belongs to Jackson, Tennessee and to Mrs. Janie Brady Jones, the widow of the engineer, who has lived in the community for over a half-century. The writer is indebted to Mrs. Jones for the details of this account.

NEGRO ROUSTABOUT SONGS

"I'm Wukin' My Way Back Home"

Exhausting labor was required of the roustabout, and it is not surprising that there is a predominance of work songs in his music. The hard-driving mate, interested only in getting the freight moved quickly, liked for his men to sing. He would select as leader a Negro who could "raise a song"; and then he saw to it that the tune was kept at a fairly rapid pace. The tempo of the singing was an important factor in the length of time required to handle a cargo. Most of these melodies are in duple measure. They were created as accompaniments to the movements of the body, and the marching or trotting rhythm that developed naturally during busy hours on the levee had a definite effect upon the meter of the songs.

This melody must have been sung first by a rouster who was both weary and homesick. In many of these songs there is a plaint about the heavy work and the hard life, accompanied by the longing for the trip to end. This melody uses the tones of the pentatonic scale in rondo form:

Verse I.
I'm wukin' my way back home,
I'm wukin' my way back home,
I'm wukin' my way back home,
Baby, I'm wukin' my way back home.

Verse 2.
Timber don't git too heavy fo' me,
An' sacks too heavy to stack,
All that I crave fo' many long day,
Is yo' lovin' when I git back.

Verse 3.
Oh fireman, keep her rollin' fo' me,
Let's make it to Memphis, Tennessee,
Fo' my back is gittin' tired,
An' my shoulder is gittin' sore.

Song of the Mississippi Boatmen

Our boat is steady rollin'
But she ain't rollin' right,
'Cause Johnny Boy, the fireman, is sleep most ev'ry night.
Yo yo yo yo yo yo yo yo.

The ice an' snow a-comin',
The frost is mean an' col',
The North win' gets to blowin',
Then to Memphis we mus' roll.

We're rollin' down the river,
The evenin' sun is low;
It makes a po' boy lonesome
Who got no place to go.

I love ev'ryhody no matter how rough I seem,
I work hard for my livin',
There's no use livin' mean!
Yo yo yo yo yo yo yo yo yo.

Sho Leaves Memphis

"Sho Leaves Memphis" was sung on the "Silver Cloud" and the "Clyde". The river packets carried twenty-five or thirty men to a watch. There were two watches, a forward and an after watch. The Negroes worked in shifts of six hours each, but when a stop was made at a large town where there would be a quantity of freight to move, the mate would call for "All Hands". There were two crews of roustors; but when they would get into a freight pile, there was rest for no one. Often the work would continue through the night by the light of rosin torches placed along the bank. The tone series used in this song is the pentatonic scale with the 2d omitted when intervals imply that scale tonality.

Sho leaves Memphis an' she nevuh make no stop.
She got to Helena an' wuz due at Eagle Rock.

Oh, big boat in the ben',
Ain't doin' nothin' but killin' men.

Soundings at Memphis

And it's Quarter Less Twain.
Mark Twain. Quarter Less Taree.
And it's Quarter Less Taree.
And it's Mark Taree. Quarter Taree.
And it's Half Taree.
And it's Quarter Less Fo'.
And it's Mark Fo'.
And it's No Bottom.

THE WORK SONGS OF THE NEGRO

O My Honey, Take Me
Back

The Negro has long been accustomed to sing at work. His tunes may range from an old spiritual to the latest blues hit

and whose subjects may deal with anything under the sun. The Negro, by nature rhythmical, works better if he sings at his labor. He seems to lighten his toil, perhaps even to forget the fact that he is working, if he has a song to help him along.

Tubman K. Hedrick heard from a hotel kitchen in Memphis, this song: "O My Honey, Take Me Back". He said of the lyric, "Love is not love that too openly proclaims itself. It is a solo with no audience intended or wanted except one person in the whole world. And as such, the melody carries the lyric persuasively".

O my honey, take me back,
O my dahlin', I'll be true.
I am mon'in' all day long,
O my honey, I love you.

I have loved you in joy and pain,
In de sunshine and de rain;
O my honey, heah me do,
O my dahlin', I love you.

Baby's in Memphis

Work songs are taken at random from the experiences of everyday life. The Negro sings his flowing consciousness into expression. Work-songs give a keen insight into the Negro's real self. Song is a natural accompaniment of work. Songs are improvised at will under the influence of work. The themes vary with the thoughts of the workmen or with the suggestions of the occasion.

As the Negro goes about his work, thinking of his money and of his "baby", it is no wonder that the following song appeals to him:

Baby's in Memphis layin' around.
Baby's in Memphis layin' around.
Baby's in Memphis layin' around,
Waitin' for de dollah I done found, I done found;
Waitin' for de dollah I done found.

William C. Handy

The only West Tennessee folk song writer, composer, and arranger is William C. Handy whose folk "blues" have made him West Tennessee famous and celebrated folk-music artist. He is the first person to publish or to feature the "blues" by name.

The success of Handy's "Memphis Blues" won for him the title: "Father of the Blues", and Memphis became the "Birthplace of the Blues". Handy is the author of the book, "Blues" which is an autobiography. He edited the book, "Blues, An Anthology".

Handy's folksongs which originated in West Tennessee are: "Memphis Blues", "Jogo Blues", "Joe Turner Blues", "Hesitating Blues", "Beale Street Blues", "Somebody's Wrong About Dis Bible", "Annie Love", and "'Way Down South Where the Blues Began".

Book Reviews

Isla Paschal Richardson, My Heart Waketh. Bruce Humprhies, Inc., Boston, 1947, $2.50.

"My Heart Waketh" by Isla Paschal Richardson has the touch of delicacy, the depth of understanding, and the beauty of expression whose "---loveliness will stab (the) very soul with poignant ecstasies". The reader will be reminded here of the deft touches of Edna St. Vincent Millay, of the philosophy of Walt Whitman, and of the swift-flowing conversational style of Robert Frost. Here one finds intense living laughter "as vital as food and air", and the exalted beauty of simple things. Here too is solace comes as "---the swift strong flight of birds who sing a prelude to the night " or "music remembered as in a dream". Here is found such understanding in the lark spur that "--- I haven't worried about--oh, a lot of things". Here is a heart made mellow through sorrow, made wise through joyous living. In the title poem we hear:

My dear, last night I prayed that I might learn
The art of proving all the love I bear.

The reader will delight in such titled lyrics as "Weapons", "To A Too Busy Woman", "The Nibbler", "The Hill-Top", "Salute", "The Author of A Best Seller Grows Cynical", "A Tree in January" and many others. "To look on beauty", as does the author, "silences the tongue", so that we are satisfied rather with sharing with her as she listens to a bluebird singing while she remarks:

I am not half as good as I want to be
When a bluebird sings from an apple tree.

Editor's note: This little volume will make an excellent Christmas gift for a friend.

Harry Harrison Kroll, Darker Grows the Valley, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1947, $3.00.

It was a lovely valley, along the beautiful Clinch River near Cumberland Gap, closely confined by the high hills and mountains. It had been an Indian old field, and a great burial place for the tribes -- a Valley of Bones. But long before the first white man came, the Indians had disappeared -- perhaps before the stroke of pestilence.

The first white men to view it were Josiah and David Clinch. On a Long Hunt they had climbed a mountain and looked down on the silver river, the green forest, the fields craving the plow. Josiah blazed trees, noted landmarks on a crude map, swore to return, and dreamed of it from that day. David too had his mind set on it.

Five years later, in 1778, Josiah quitted his Carolina home after a bitter encounter with his brother, and set out on the dangerous overland trip with his family. Fall storms made the French Broad a churning torrent and they almost met disaster

when their crude raft was swamped. Josiah's wife died from the exposure, on the buffalo trace. They were near a salt lick, and, afraid to bury her at a place where forest creatures abounded, they packed the corpse in salt and carried it with them. Landmarks were missed while they searched for the valley. Reach it at last they did, and at the sight of the peaceful beauty before them, the group knelt in prayer. And the next afternoon David Clinch and four men rode up to stake a rival claim--defeated for the moment.

So begins a chronicle of five generations -- the line of Josiah Clinch of Clinch's Valley. More than a century and a half unroll before it ends. For each generation a woman takes the center of the scene. After Rachel, who died on the way, came Charity; then Faith; then Hope; and in our own time Love. For these people of stalwart stock followed the Bible names. In the family Bible their history was recorded. The Bible was their culture. And their ways were Old Testament ways of violence, strong passion, primitive justice and loyalties, mercy and fear, love and feud and plague and death. Still Clinch's Valley was a Valley of Bones, but breath enters into the bones and they live.

It is extraordinary how closely linked, how firmly compacted is this narrative. For all its great diversity of incident, its variety of action, its succeeding characters, it holds a wonderful unity. The isolation of the community contributes to it--a segment of inbred native stock almost cut off from the world and little touched by it--till the wars came, the Civil War that parted brother from brother and brought its dangerous trail of renegades and deserters, draft dodgers and stragglers; and the First World War that changed the face of the globe -- and the face of this remote hamlet.

But war was not the climax and catastrophe. For these people so deeply and closely associated with the soil of their almost forgotten corner, this soil enriched by their family blood, this beloved valley of their ancestral bones, TVA was to strike the stroke of doom. Old Granny Hope, whose memory and life spanned the family saga, swore that she would never leave the valley, come hell or high water. And just before the devastating waters fell over the darkening homeland, they found her dead in her rocking chair, the old Clinch Bible in her lap.

Reprint of Review.

Louis Phillippe who was forced to leave France due to the conspiracy of his father to overthrow the First French Republic, and who himself was later to become King of France, visited the Tellico Blockhouse at Tellico Plains in 1897. He stayed for two weeks in the home of Major Tillman Dixon of Dixon Springs Tennessee, in what is now Smith County.

Margaret Bradford Boni: Fireside Book of Folk Songs, Simon and Shuster, New York, 1947, $3.95.

This "Fireside Book of Folk Songs" by Margaret Bradford Boni is one of the most attractive volumes we have seen in a long time. Its completeness and beauty ranges all the way from the author's prefatory note to the musical arrangement for piano done by Norman Lord and the artistic decorative designs done by Alice and Martin Probenson. The illustrations, in color, are as beautifully harmonious as the blending hues in autumn leaves.

"It is characteristic of the songs of the people", says the author, "that they call for group performance. Many of them -- work songs, dance songs, nursery rhymes, songs of festival -- were so rendered from their inception -----". So it is again intended here that they be presented in a form which may add something to the joy of self-entertainment.

The range includes "Ballads and Old Favorites", "Work Songs", "Marching Songs and Songs of Valor", "Christmas Carols", and "Old Hymns and Spirituals". The ballads are taken from the lore of the various countries -- Irish, Scottish, English, American, German, French, Italian, Canadian, Mexican. The work songs run the range of sea shanty tunes, the railroad song, the cowboy song, and songs of the sea. The marching songs and songs of valor present the favorite airs of practically every known nationality. The Christmas carols reinterpret the Christ Child wherever Christianity exists. The spirituals and hymns reemphasize the faith which has made life meaningful wherever these are sung.

"The Fireside Book of Folk Songs may stimulate interest in our cultural history and in so doing it will do well, but its primary purpose, as the title implies, is to encourage the domestic performance of the songs of long ago that are still the songs of today". To see this book is to appreciate its attractive format and usableness.

Lucieu L., and Mrs. L.L. McDowell, Memory Melodies: A collection of Folk Songs from Middle Tennessee, Smithville, Tennessee, 1947. $1.50.

It may be said that Memory Melodies is Mrs. L.L. McDowell's own private collection of Middle Tennessee ballads. She lived all her life in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains, up until the present time, so she is familiar with that section of the state and with the people there.

Her collection is very varied and one which contains quite a bit of local color. Many of the ballads were remembered by Mrs. McDowell from her youth, although in many cases parts of the songs were furnished by her friends.

Here is portrayed the simple, easy going life of the Tennessee country folk, particularily those who live in the mountains. Quite a few of the ballads are reminisicent of the early pioneer days and have been handed down from generation to generation. They sang the ballads as they accompanied themselves on a banjo or guitar, or also sang them as they worked, and also used them for their square dances

Very few of the ballads are recorded or have any known author, and the music given in the book is only the melody. Most of the ballads contain several verses, often as many as twenty. This length is due to the fact that the verses are short and simple, and it takes several of them to tell the complete story.

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Reviewed by: Miss Mildred Stephenson
Physical Education and Folk Music
Tennessee Wesleyan College

The Naming of Rockwood

Rockwood was named by a Rebel General soon after the end of the Civil War. General Wood and his men encamped at the foot of Walden's Ridge one night. Noticing the very rich deposits of coal and iron ore, General Wood was determined to return to this site after the war was over. He did return and became one of the founders of the Roane Iron Company which manufactures pigiron. This was the first blast furnace erected south of the Mason and Dixon Line.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

At Saint Joseph, Tennessee, a beautiful church is nearing completion. It is not the project of any religious denomination but is to be dedicated sometime in November to the Sacred Harp singers of the entire South and will become by deed their property. The structure -- of an excellent quality of limestone quarried nearby -- and indeed the whole project and its financing represent a beneficence of L. P. Odom of Saint Joseph, a leading friend of and participant in Sacred Harp singing and chief promoter of the 103 year-old manual of traditional song in its recent edition (1936), the book which has given the folk-musical custom and institution its name.

The United Sacred Harp Musical Association held its annual three-day singing convention in the Municipal Auditorium, Atlanta, on the second Sunday in September and the Friday and Saturday before. Leading singers from Georgia and five nearby states made up the "class". The Atlanta group holds an informal suzerainty over all the local groups which foster this unique survival in our culture. Dr. George Pullen Jackson was elected chairman of the convention.

A sound film portraying the Sacred Harp traditional singing institution is in process of realization. Its production is in the hands of the Southern Educational Film Production Service of Athens, Georgia, and its authenticity, both as to history and present-day aspects, will be assured by George Pullen Jackson, who is cooperating with the producers. This film will be one of the first if not the first to document American folk ways in this vehicle.

Congratulations to the Illinois Folklore Society upon their initial publication under date of October, 1947, under the title "Illinois Folklore". The editor is Jesse W. Harris of Carbondale. Communications may be addressed to Miss Tina M. Goodwin, secretary-treasurer, 409 West Monroe Street, Carbondale, Illinois. "Stories from The Illinois Wabash" were specific, colloquue interest.

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING
TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Tennessee Polytechnic Institute
November 1, 1947

MORNING SESSION 9:00--11:45

Devotional .....Dean John L. Meadows

Business.....President

Survey of West Tennessee Folk Music.....Mrs. Cecil C. Howe

This Eerie World.....Professor E. G. Rogers

Folk Songs.....Mr. & Mrs. Roscoe Harmon & Billy Lassiter

LUNCH 11:45--1:00 - TECH CAFETERIA

AFTERNOON SESSION 1:00--3:30

Folklore and Folklorists in Print.....Mr. Clarence Snelgrove

Early American Sacred Music.....Professor Paul McConnell

Folk Music In and Out of the Concert Hall...Professor Charles F. Bryan

Election of Officers.....

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The nominating committee reported the names of Mrs. L. L. McDowell, Smithville, for president; Charles F. Bryan, Nashville, for vice-president; T. J. Farr, Cookeville, for treasurer; and E. G. Rogers, Athens, for secretary and as editor of the Bulletin. The Society approved the list as the officers for the ensuing year.

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Notes on the Annual Meeting

1. Dr. John L. Meadows, Dean of Students, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville, conducted a devotional in opening the meeting with a reading of Psalm 24 and with prayer.

2. Mrs. L. L. McDowell, president, presided throughout the day, and conducted the business session which consisted in reports from the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the nominating committee; and in resolutions from the floor regarding routine matters of policy, and of the time, place, and nature of the next annual meeting. A

special resolution was offered to be conveyed to President James L. Robb and the Administration of Tennessee Wesleyan College for its sponsorship of and contribution to the Society's Publication on the campus.

3. Dr. T. J. Farr emphasized the necessity for a slight increase in membership in order to hold membership fees at one dollar in the light of increased publication costs. Members are asked to invite friends to become members. Dr. Farr mentioned several of those among the membership who have had recent publications of folk materials:

   Memory Melodies ---- Mrs. L. L. McDowell
   (Two previous collections of folk music)
   American Folk Music for High Schools and Other Folk Groups
   Pullen T. Jackson and Charles F. Bryan
   The Bell Witch (Musical Cantata) ---- Charles F. Bryan
   My Heart Waketh (Poetry) --- Isla Paschal Richardson
   Fiddlers in the Cumberlands --- Mrs. John Blankenship
   Early Folk Medical Practices in Tennessee -- E. G. Rogers
   The Tennessee (Rivers of America Series) - Donald Davidson
   The Wilderness Road --- Robert L. Kincaid

4. Mrs. Cecil C. Howse of Humbolt presented a "Survey of West Tennessee Folk Music ". Her paper was prefaced with an historical-economic background of the materials arising in the cultural patterns of the songs and dances of the Chicasaw Indians, the anecdotes of Davy Crockett, the Validity of the ballad of Casey Jones, and of the Negro Ronstabout and Work Songs. Her paper will appear in the Bulletin.

5. E. G. Rogers of Athens presented samples from a collection of materials titled "This Eerie World" in which the overlapping of stories dealing with witchcraft, ghosts, weird and mysterious happenings, and treasure-trove is becoming terribly and amusingly confused with some of our patterns of modern culture.

6. A group of folk songs, instrumentally and vocally, was brought by Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Harmon and by Billy Lassiter. Billy sang encore numbers again on the afternoon program.

7. Lunch was served by the Cafeteria Management of Tennessee Tech which school served throughout the day as a most hospitable host to the Society.

8. Mr. Clarence Snelgrove, librarian of Tennessee Tech, gave a comprehensive resume of the books in print which may be classed as folk materials or folk studies. The meanings of "folklore" as differentiated from the earlier term "antiquities" was stressed. Significant changes in the general attitudes toward folk lore were emphasized. Mr. Snelgrove presented a display of folk materials of the Tennessee Polytechnic central depository of materials representing the concepts and philosophy of the Tennessee Folklore Society. The library now has a complete file of Bulletins.

9. Music lovers will remember for a long while the series of American Folk Songs so ably brought by Professor Paul McConnell of The University of the South, Sewanee, and a group of fourteen young men who composed his choral group. The music of William Billings was used illustrating the fact that when music is sung which was formerly known only to instrumentation, this is to give to it a proper evaluation and appreciative interpretation.

10. Charles F. Bryan, Associate Professor of Music at Peabody College and Music-Arranger for WSM, discussed and interpreted "Folk Music In and Out of the Concert Hall". Professor Bryan stressed the types of the true American folk music which will obviously survive in competition with a pseudo-balladistic type of material which is commercially being effected through radio. This, too, may be kept more truly "folk" through the public demands of cultural acceptance. He emphasized his themes vocally and instrumentally.

"Folk Music of West Tennessee" is written by Mrs. Ruth Whitener Howse, Humboldt, Tennessee. Mrs. Howse is making a statewide study of the folk music of Tennessee. She is a member of the Folklore Society. The Folk Music Map of West Tennessee on page 77 is reproduced by Mrs. Lyda Bishop, student of the Tennessee Wesleyan College Art Department.